



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

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## Fire Island National Seashore News Release

Release date: August 18, 2004

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Phone number: 631 289-4810 x 228

Date: August 18, 2004

Release code: 04-11

### Park Commemorates 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Walks, Tours and Ceremonies Planned



Special guided tours along the beach and into the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dunes Wilderness will be conducted on September 3 in recognition of the signing of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

A three-day park-long guided hike will be conducted from Tuesday through Thursday, September 7-9. Overnight accommodations are limited. Call the Appalachian Mountain Club to make your reservations.

For a reflection on the history of the establishment of Fire Island National Seashore, join us for a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration on Saturday, September 11, at 1:00 p.m. at the Ocean Beach Community House on Fire Island.

*NPS Photos*

Fire Island National Seashore is celebrating some important dates this September. Perhaps the most important is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the park on September 11, 1964. That was also the year that the Wilderness Act was signed (on September 3, 1964), although Fire Island's federal wilderness wasn't designated until December 23, 1980. To commemorate both of these special occasions, the national seashore is hosting several special events and programs.

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## **Fire Island Wilderness Hike**

**Friday, September 3, 2004**

**9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

If you haven't yet experienced the Fire Island Wilderness, mark your calendar for Friday, September 3. In recognition of the signing of the Wilderness Act, the park is conducting guided hikes along the beach in front of its designated wilderness, with short forays into the wilderness area to discover its treasures. You can join one of these half-day hikes from either the Watch Hill Visitor Center or the Wilderness Visitor Center at Smith Point. Group size is limited, so make your reservation by calling the Wilderness Visitor Center at 631-282-3010. Plan to be out from 9:30 - 2:00, and bring your own lunch and water. Parking is at Smith Point County Park (fee charged for parking). It's still tick and mosquito season and poison ivy is still lush during the summer, so the groups won't be exploring deep in the interior of the wilderness. But we will provide an orientation and an opportunity to explore behind the high dunes far enough away from boat and auto traffic to enjoy the quietness. Perhaps you'll appreciate why those individuals and special interest groups sought to protect this wilderness—the only federally-designated wilderness area in New York State—with the December 23, 1980 establishment of the "Otis Pike Fire Island High Dunes Wilderness" in Fire Island National Seashore.

## **3-Day Fire Island Trek**

**Tuesday - Thursday**

**September 7-9, 2004**

A new 3-day island-long ecology hike has been revived in honor of the park's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Group size is limited by the availability of lodging. The group will walk about 7-10 miles per day, from Robert Moses State Park to Smith Point County Park, learning about the island and its history and resources. The first day will start with a guided tour of the Fire Island Lighthouse and a special walk conducted by Bob LaRosa of the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society. The group will continue its trek to Atlantique for the conclusion of the first day's programs and activities. Overnight accommodations at the Appalachian Mountain Club's Fire Island facility are limited, so sign up soon. For Day 2, the group plans to hike past the western communities and into the Sunken Forest, then on down the beach to Watch Hill for dinner and a campout at Fire Island National Seashore's only group campground. On Day 3, participants will hike the 7-mile stretch of beach in front of the wilderness area, ending up at the Wilderness Visitor Center near Smith Point. Participants will pay for their own transportation, meals and reasonably priced lodging. To register for the Fire Island Trek, contact the Appalachian Mountain Club at 212-606-2293.

## **Fire Island National Seashore**

**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration**

**Saturday, September 11, 2004**

**1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Although the date holds a more poignant significance since the events of 2001, we can appreciate its local significance as the date on which Congress established Fire Island National Seashore in 1964 "... for the purpose of conserving and preserving for the use of future generations certain relatively unspoiled and undeveloped beaches, dunes, and other natural features..." (Public Law 88-587). Join park founders and current staff at the Ocean Beach Community House for an afternoon of reflection on the history of the establishment of the national seashore. Keynote speaker is Dr. Lee Koppelman, Executive Director of the Long Island Regional Planning Board and director of the Suffolk County Planning Commission at the time of the national seashore's establishment. As an active participant during the process, Dr. Koppelman will share his insight into the Congressional intent of the park's formation. Early residents and some of the original "movers and shakers" will also share their reminiscences. The Fire Island Association and the Fire Island Year-Round Resident Association are supporting the event. Light refreshments will be provided. Let the park know if you plan to attend by calling Patty Laskowski at 631-289-4810 ext. 224.

Your participation in commemorating these special events is welcomed. To learn more about Fire Island National Seashore, visit the park's web site at [www.nps.gov/fiis](http://www.nps.gov/fiis).

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